



Wellness in Alaska Child Care



Best Practices



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overview

The Wellness in Alaska Child Care (WIACC) grant was a comprehensive project designed to provide child care staff with training that would result in children adopting lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity. The grant promoted these healthy habits to meet the need for interventions focused on childhood obesity in Alaska. The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs, and the Alaska Department of Agriculture, Farm to School Program worked in conjunction with Alaska's Child Care Licensing offices, Child Care Assistance offices, and various child care center professionals, Head Start agencies, and sponsoring organizations of family day care homes to promote, implement and facilitate this unique grant opportunity.

The Department of Education & Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs provided three regional trainings in the spring of 2011 in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Attendees received training from Dr. Diane Craft, developer of the *Active Play!* activity book, which focuses on physical activity that can be conducted indoors and outdoors, in both large and small spaces. The training also included presenters from the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) on *More Than Mud Pies*, a full year's worth of thematic curriculum that includes recipes, games, songs, and other nutrition-related activities, and *Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids* provided training on family-style dining in the child care setting. Each training participant received a take-home copy of each of the three resources. Upon completion of the training each participant had the opportunity to apply for mini-grants that allowed them to purchase supplies to fully implement the activities from the three training modules.

This grant enabled Child Nutrition Programs to pilot the Farm to Child Care Mini-Grant. Child



USCG Kodiak Child
Development Center

Nutrition Programs worked with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture using information from the Alaska Farm to School grant to formulate grant objectives and requirements. The main focus was to promote activities that connected students, teachers, food service staff, community members, and parents with products grown or produced in Alaska. Many WIACC participants put great emphasis on the farm-to-table aspect, providing another avenue to further promote healthy food choices and increase Alaska youths' understanding of how food in its original form gets to their plates.

Grant awardees were responsible for submitting a variety of reporting documents throughout the grant period in order for Child Nutrition Program staff to monitor their implementation process. Through these reporting documents Child Nutrition Program staff were able to gather an assortment of information in regard to physical activity, healthy eating, and family-style dining.



farm to child care

The Farm to Child Care (FTCC) mini-grant was offered through the original Wellness in Alaska Child Care grant. During the first two quarters many WIACC awardees used their grant awards to purchase aero gardens, soil, seeds, worm composters, and planter boxes to create their own gardens. This additional grant aligned perfectly with the WIACC grant as they both greatly emphasized healthy eating.

The goals of the FTCC mini-grant were to increase Alaska youths' understanding of how food gets from its original form to the plate, promote healthy food choices, and to encourage a preference for food grown and harvested in Alaska. Grant participants had to submit an application outlining what type of Farm to Child Care activity they would promote. The project had to be supported by the agency food service staff and required partnership with a mentor such as a master gardener, farmer, or chef.



*Petersburg
Children's Center*

Grant applications were evaluated and award amounts were distributed based on the relative need for the proposed activity, the importance of the problem being addressed, benefits likely to derive from the proposed activity, and the number of children the grant would reach. Fourteen grants were awarded with a total of \$19,900 dispersed.



Healthy Eating

Nutrition Education

Healthy eating habits and nutrition education were a large focal point of this grant. NFSMI's **Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids** emphasized the State's recommendation to implement family-style dining, and its correlation with healthy eating habits in young children. Family-style meals include food offered in serving bowls and platters, and beverages served in small pitchers on the table. Children choose how much food to serve themselves, and if needed, they have help from an adult with passing bowls of food to one another, or pouring beverages.



According to NFSMI, children benefit from **family-style dining** in the following ways:

Family-style meals reinforce social skills

- Taking turns
- Passing food to others
- Saying please and thank you
- Helping to set the table for their friends

Children practice serving skills

- Children practice fine and gross motor skills to serve and pass food.
- Children learn appropriate mealtime behaviors like serving without touching food.
- Children learn not to eat out of the serving dishes or off serving utensils.

Children feel in control of their eating

- Children may take small servings of food and additional food later in the meal.
- Children may choose not to take a food initially, but change their minds as the meal proceeds.
- Children feel confident that additional food will be available throughout the meal.
- Children take approximately the amounts of foods they'll eat, decreasing the amount of waste.

Indirectly encourages them to try new things

- Children who feel in control of their eating are more likely to try new things.

Because young children do not have fixed eating habits, the childcare setting is a good place for them to develop specific ideas about what foods they want, and when they want them. To maximize children's benefit of this domestic setting, family-style dining not only emphasizes the planning and preparation aspects of healthy meals, but also establishes healthy eating schedules. It is important



for adults to recognize these food behaviors and guide children to explore new foods in an environment that also strengthens social development. Family-style dining is the perfect opportunity for adults to model healthy eating habits and encourage different food choices.

Studies suggest that changes to the classroom and social environment can increase the number of fruits and vegetables, whole-grain products, fat-free or low-fat milk, lean meat and meat alternatives a child consumes. For example, a change in the social environment such as a simple verbal prompt appears to have significant impact on the likelihood that children will take, and subsequently consume, a fruit serving as part of their school lunch.¹

NFSMI's **More Than Mud Pies** provides nutrition education activities that help children understand five basic concepts about healthy choices:

- 1) Eat a variety of foods for good health.
- 2) Foods can be identified by group, source, part of the plant, where grown, where purchased, or nutritional content.
- 3) Foods can be described by color.
- 4) Foods can be described by size, smell, texture, temperature, taste, and form.

- 5) Lots of physical activity, outdoor play, nutritious food, and water help children have strong, healthy bones.

Children who have learned about making wise food choices are able to apply that knowledge in their daily meal settings where they are able to choose their own foods.

Nutrition education not only promotes these wise food choices among youth, but it also provides valuable learning skills that will carry over into adulthood. *More Than Mud Pies* outlines a variety of nutrition education activities that are simple, fun, successful, and affordable in a diverse setting of child care facilities. Each activity has book titles to encourage reading.



Tlingit & Haida Head Start



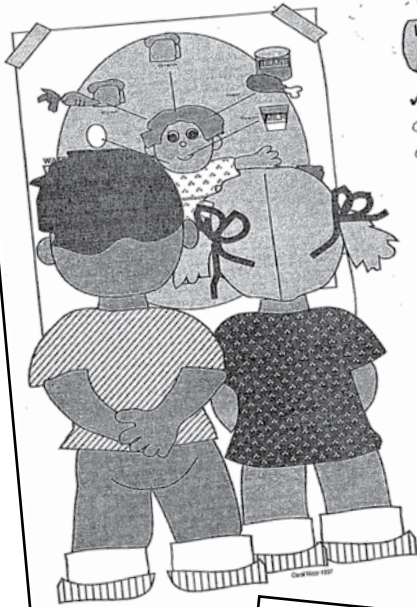
*Petersburg Children's Center
reads Blueberries for Sal*

¹ Schwartz MB. The influence of a verbal prompt on school lunch fruit consumption: a pilot study. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity 2007, 4:6:10. <http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/4/1/6>.



My Body

Opportunities for Learning Children will match a particular food with the part of the body that the food helps.



Make Self-Image Collage

Things You'll Need ✓glue
✓crayons ✓colored
yarn ✓food pictures
✓large piece of butcher paper
or brown wrapping paper for
each child ✓scissors



Things You'll Do ✓Child or
teacher traces the body
of someone else onto the
paper. ✓Color in the traced
outlines. ✓Glue pictures of food
next to parts of the body the
food helps (i.e., milk next to
teeth, broccoli next to eyes and
skin.) ✓Connect each food to
the body with colored yarn. ✓
While working on the project,
discuss different foods and how
they help the body. Use "A
Family Guide to Nutrients" to
help with the discussion. ✓Hang
completed collages in classroom.



Books to Read

My First Body Book
by Christopher Rice
and Melanie Rice

Me and My Amazing Body
by Joan Sweeney



Songs to Sing

"Head, Shoulders,
Knees, and Toes"



What Families Can Do

Send "A Family Guide to
Nutrients" home with the
children and tell families that
the children are learning how
foods help the body stay
healthy.

Play Dough Food Centerpieces



Things You'll Need

✓waxed paper ✓large
bowl ✓liquid measuring
cups ✓dry measuring
cups ✓measuring spoons
✓mixing spoon

INGREDIENTS for Play Dough

1 cup salt
1/2 cup water
1 1/2 cups flour
2 Tbsp oil
Food coloring



Things You'll Do

✓Make
play dough, mixing all
ingredients except food
coloring. ✓Give each child
enough play dough to shape
into a favorite food. Add a few
drops of food coloring to the
dough. Have children work on a
piece of waxed paper, mixing in
the color and shaping their
play dough food. ✓Tape the
children's names to their
"foods" and display in a bowl as
a centerpiece.



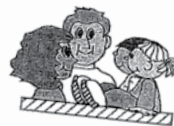
Books to Read

Eating the
Alphabet: Fruits
and Vegetables
from A to Z
by Lois Ehlert



Songs to Sing

"Peas Porridge Hot"



What Families Can Do

Tell families you are teaching
the children about new foods.
Encourage families to serve a
variety of foods at home
including new foods and old
favorites. Send "A Family
Guide to Mealtime With
Children" home to the family

Make Baked Apple



Things You'll Need ✓Plastic serrated knife/apple corer ✓small oven-proof pan ✓measuring spoons ✓spoon for basting ✓cutting board

INGREDIENTS for each child
1 apple
1/2 tsp brown sugar
1/8 tsp cinnamon
Pinch of nutmeg



Things You'll Do ✓Wash apple. ✓Cut (slice) off bottom of apple so it rests flat on cut surface. ✓Remove core with apple corer and teacher's assistance. ✓Place apple in pan. ✓Fill center with brown sugar. ✓Sprinkle with cinnamon and nutmeg. ✓Add 1 Tbsp of water to the pan. ✓Bake in 350 °F oven about 40 minutes until the apple is tender. ✓Baste juices over apple while cooking. (Teacher's task.)

✓Talk about: What cooking does to the apple, which ingredient sweetens the taste, where nutmeg and cinnamon come from (nutmeg is a seed in the fruit which grows on the calabash tree found in Africa; cinnamon is bark from the cinnamon tree found in India), which food group apples belong to (fruit group), which vitamin the apple supplies (vitamin C, which helps prevent illnesses and promotes the healing of wounds).

More About Apples

Things You'll Do ✓Discuss where apples come from. ✓Visit an apple orchard. If you are unable to visit an orchard, find a picture of an apple tree or draw one. ✓Apple trees come from seeds. Cut an apple and count the seeds. ✓Ask: "How many apple trees could we start from the seeds of this one apple?" ✓Talk about different foods made from apples: apple juice, cider, canned sliced apples, and applesauce.



Apple Poem

Things You'll Need
Poem, "Away Up High"

AWAY UP HIGH

Away up high in an apple tree;
(Point up.)
Two red apples smile at me.
(Form two circles with fingers.)
I shook the tree as hard as I
could. (Pretend to shake tree.)
Down came those apples;
And m-m-m they were good!
(Rub tummy.)

From Folk Songs USA by
John Lomax and Alan Lomax



Things You'll Do ✓Teach children the poem about apples.



Books to Read
Ten Apples Up On Top
by Dr. Seuss



Songs to Sing
"Apples and Bananas"

Peter Rabbit Tasting Party



Things You'll Need ✓assortment of raw fresh vegetables and fruits ✓large head of cabbage ✓dips ✓trays ✓plastic serrated edge knives ✓The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter



Things You'll Do ✓Help the children prepare the vegetables and fruits for tasting. ✓Cut a flat surface on the bottom of the cabbage and scoop out the inside to create a bowl for the dip (teacher's task). ✓Decorate the front of the cabbage to look like a rabbit with small pieces of vegetables or fruits. Be sure to give Peter some whiskers and floppy ears. ✓Read The Tale of Peter Rabbit and talk about the importance of vegetables and fruits. If someone has a rabbit costume, this is a fun way to have Peter tell his own story to the children.



physical activity

Nutrition alone will not combat childhood obesity, and it certainly isn't the only factor when trying to live a healthier life, which is why the WIACC grant also focused on physical activity. Getting adequate vigorous physical activity can be difficult in Alaska, especially during the winter. Extreme temperatures, and inclement weather for long periods can make outside play very difficult. Many child care centers lack the indoor space needed to conduct large games that are usually played outdoors. Additionally, family day care home providers, teachers in child care centers and Head Start programs may not always have the knowledge to facilitate indoor large motor skill development with limited space.

Dr. Diane Craft's **Active Play!** activity book was a perfect tool for child care providers in Alaska. It focuses on activities that can be conducted indoors and outdoors, in both small and large spaces. Dr. Craft's activities are great for cold days when children need to be active but are confined to a small indoor space; many of them can be conducted with inexpensive items that might already exist at home.

According to Dr. Craft, children who have mature fundamental movement skills are more



likely to choose to be physically active into their teenage years. Fundamental movement skills are basic human movements that are developed through practice. There are three categories of fundamental movement skills:

- 1) Locomotor skills: Movements used to move from place to place: running, jumping, hopping, sliding, galloping, skipping, and leaping.
- 2) Object control skills: Movements using objects in a controlled manner: swing a bat, catch a ball: throwing, catching, kicking, and striking.
- 3) Stability movements: Skills that increase balance while changing body position: twisting, turning, bending, stretching, swinging, and springing.



All of the activities in Dr. Craft's *Active Play!* manual help children develop their fundamental movement skills. See the list of activities exemplified below and the fundamental movement skills that they improve.

- Swat the Fly, Running with Streamers, All Stop & Go Music (running)
- Bubble Wrap Jumping (jumping)
- Hop Scotch, Land/Lake (hopping)
- Puzzle Carry (gallop)
- Clean out the Backyard, Clean up the Floor (throwing)
- Easy Catching (catching)
- Clean out the Backyard (kicking)
- Easy Striking, Swat the Fly (striking)



See appendix (page 33) for seven activities from *Active Play!*



ALLIGATOR PIT

Suggested by Dana DeCarlo

Crossing an alligator pit on a narrow balance beam is a thrilling challenge for children! The alligator pit is really your floor, the balance beam is a flat foam pool noodle, and the alligator is you!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice stability

EQUIPMENT

- A 'balance beam' made from two pieces of flat foam pool noodle sections, joined at ends and taped to the floor. Masking tape lines on the carpet will also work.
- Basket
- Many safe objects to carry, such as socks, beanbags, foam puzzle pieces, and pieces of foam cut from pool noodles.
- Duct tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the balance beam to the floor. Place the basket at the far end of the balance beam. Have plenty of small toys and other safe objects for the children to carry at the near end of the beam. Tell the children where alligators live and what they eat. The children's job is to walk the beam, and put things into the basket at the other end of the beam. Explain that the alligator who lives in the pit will not bother the children as long as they stay on the beam and don't drop anything that they are carrying. If they drop something, or step off the beam, the alligator will chase them until they drop everything they are carrying in the basket. Give each child one item to carry across the beam and drop in the basket. After each child has gone once, increase what each must carry. Vary the skills. Ask children to carry beanbags balanced on their heads and shoulders. Have them jump across with foam blocks between their knees. Let them walk backwards across the beam with arms full of socks. When children drop objects into the pit, or step off the beam, chase them and move your extended arms up and down like an alligator's jaws. School-aged children might enjoy playing the part of the alligator during this activity.

Harder: Give the children more things to carry and harder ways of moving to make this activity more challenging. Tape a curved line on the floor as the balance beam to increase difficulty.

Variety: Pretend that floor spots are 'lily pads.' Arrange spots on the floor and let the children pretend they are frogs that must step, jump or hop from lily pad to lily pad across the alligator pit.



BUBBLE WRAP JUMPING

Inspired by Renée McCall

Tape some bubble wrap to the floor and every child will want to jump until all the bubbles are popped!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice jumping • Develop cardiovascular endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Bubble wrap, at least a 10 ft. length, 24 inches wide

Equipment Tip: 1/2 in. bubbles pop best. Ask adults to save wrap for this activity. Some businesses will donate wrap, if asked.

- Clear packaging tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the wrap to the floor so it won't slip. Don't let children mouth or bite the bubble wrap. Instruct the children to move in only one direction when jumping the length of the wrap. No return trips with more than one child jumping at the same time! Or tape a square piece of wrap to the floor for each child if you want them to jump in place.

Show children how to bend their knees and lift with their arms when they jump. Turn on lively music: with a strong 4/4 beat to encourage children to jump to the music!

Cues for Learning to Jump for Distance

Just Learning: "Bend your knees." "Start with your arms behind you." "Swing your arms forward as you jump." "Land on both feet at the same time."

More Experienced: "Reach up and out (at a 45° angle) as you jump." "Fall forward when you land." Refer to **On/Off** to learn more jumping cues.

Easier: Hold smaller children's hands for extra balance. Allow children with developmental delays to walk if they are not yet ready to jump.

Harder: Tape 2 ft. squares short distances apart and have school-aged children jump from square to square.

Variety: Have the children walk a 'balance beam' made from a 6 in. wide, 10 ft. long strip of bubble wrap taped to the floor.



CLEAN OUT THE BACKYARD: THROWING

This activity gives children lots of practice throwing and it's really fun!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice throwing • Cardiovascular Endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Many soft balls, fuzzy dice, or rolled socks, at least 5 per child
- A barrier made from a length of rope draped with sheets, lightweight towels, or bright cartoon character fabric
- Sleigh bells or other noisemakers (optional)
- Laundry basket to hold balls after activity (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the play area into half with the rope and fabric barrier. Keep the barrier about three feet off the ground. Hang bells or other noisemakers from the rope for excitement. Dump the same number of balls on each side of the barrier.

Start with an equal number of children on each side of the barrier. Tell the children to throw any balls on their side over the barrier to the other side. The goal is to get all the balls on the other side of the barrier.

Do not allow children to throw directly at another child's face.

Focus on the Throw, not on Hitting the Target
When helping children learn to throw, focus first on the way in which they are throwing (process) rather than throwing for distance or accuracy (product). In several of the activities in this book, such as **Sock the Cans** and **Sock'n Smiley**, children are throwing at a target. When leading these activities, make the target very large and place it close enough to the children so they can hit it often, even though they are not very accurate at throwing. Use the target only to give some purpose to their throwing, but avoid putting the emphasis on actually hitting the target regularly. Instead, give the children encouragement and feedback on the way in which they are throwing, not on how many targets they can hit. It is difficult to develop a mature throwing technique when preoccupied with hitting the target.



Stages of Throwing

At first, children only move their throwing arm. The rest of the body does not move as they throw. After determining which hand the child usually uses for throwing, ask the child to take a stance with the foot opposite the throwing hand in front of the body. This stance prompts the child to throw using a more advanced technique. As children become better at throwing, they consistently step forward as they throw. But they step forward on the 'wrong' foot. This means that a child who throws with the right arm will step forward with the right foot. Conversely, a child who throws with the left arm will step forward with the left foot. Prompt children to step forward with the foot opposite their throwing arm. This is the mature way to throw.

Cues for Learning to Throw

Just Learning: "Look at the target." "Bring the ball to your ear before you throw." "Start with this foot in front" referring to the foot opposite the throwing arm. "Step as you throw." "Point at the target" as you release the ball.

More Experienced: "Stand with your side to the target." "Throw as hard as you can."

Rubber Band Hand and Tape Toe - Suggested by Craig Learn

Place a rubber band on the wrist of the child's throwing arm. Place a piece of tape on the toe of the foot opposite the throwing arm. Prompt the child to throw with the 'rubber band hand' and step with the 'tape toe.'

Easier: Young children can stand next to the barrier and drop objects over. Children with limited mobility can sit next to the barrier and drop the soft objects over.

Harder: Challenge school-aged throwers to see how far back they can stand to throw and still get objects over the barrier.

Variety: Suspend the rope barrier at a height that is over the children's head, drape it with two or more sheets to completely block the view of the other side of the barrier, then have the children throw. It is surprising and funny to see the soft objects come flying 'out of nowhere' from the other side of the barrier. Be sure to stand so that you can see all of the children on both sides of the barrier at all times.

CLEAN OUT THE BACKYARD: KICKING

Children will get plenty of practice when you dump a bunch of soft rubber balls and let them clean up the backyard - kicking!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice kicking • Develop cardiovascular endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Soft rubber balls of different sizes, at least 3 per child
- Indoors use empty plastic gallon milk jugs instead of balls
- A barrier made from a length of rope draped with sheets, lightweight towels, or bright cartoon character fabric
- Sleigh bells or other noisemakers (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the play area into half with the rope and fabric barrier. Keep the barrier about three feet off the ground. Hang bells or other noisemakers from the rope for excitement. Dump the same number of balls on each side of the barrier. Tell the children to start with an equal number of children on each side of the barrier. The goal is to get all the balls on the other side of the barrier. Hold the hands of younger children to provide the balance they need while learning to kick.

Some children might kick a ball with enough force that it could hurt someone. Give that child a separate and more challenging kicking task. Have him kick the ball as hard as possible across the yard to see how far it goes. Do not allow any child to play **Clean Out the Backyard** in a way that another child could get hurt.

Cues for Learning to Kick

Just Learning: "Stop and step next to the ball." "Look at the ball as you kick it."

More Experienced: "Bring your leg back and then kick." "Kick hard."

Easier: This activity works with most children, regardless of their kicking skills.

Harder: For school-aged children, tie a ribbon around the leg they do not usually kick with. Tell them to kick only with the leg that has the ribbon.

EASY CATCHING

It takes lots of practice before a young child can catch a tossed ball. Make it easier to learn how to grasp by gently swinging a suspended ball into the child's outstretched arms.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice catching

EQUIPMENT

- A large, soft ball or a punch ball balloon. Punch ball balloons are much thicker and stronger than party balloons.
- One pair of pantyhose

Equipment Tip: Stretch the large top part of the pantyhose over a large, soft ball. If using a punch ball balloon, place the deflated balloon inside the open end of the pantyhose, and inflate until it fits snugly. Be sure the balloon is completely covered within the pantyhose. Tie off or cover the end of the pantyhose to prevent balloon pieces from escaping should a balloon burst.



INSTRUCTIONS

Hold the two toes of the pantyhose in one hand, so the ball end of the pantyhose is suspended off the floor or ground. Gently swing the ball toward the child's outstretched arms until he grasps it. Repeat this catching activity several times, but stop before he loses interest. When he can catch the swung ball easily, try tossing him a soft, fuzzy ball for further catching practice. School-aged children might help by tossing balls to younger children.

Cues for Learning to Catch

Just Learning: "Arms out," prompt children to stand with arms outstretched in front, ready to catch. "Look at the ball."

More Experienced: Aid timing by saying "Ready, catch." Prompt to "Catch with soft hands," or "Give with the ball." "Watch the ball all the way into your hands."

Easier: Lower the ball slowly into the child's outstretched arms until he becomes familiar with grasping the ball.

Harder: For school-aged children, toss a ball that is not held inside pantyhose. Increase the distance the ball is tossed when the child can catch most tosses. Prompt to "Move to the ball."

Variety: Change the size of the ball. Use different balls, such as a beach balls, fabric balls, or playground rubber balls. Suspend the pantyhose from a tree branch or a door frame. Have the child push the ball and catch it as it returns.

EASY STRIKING

Striking balloons with foam pool noodle bats helps children develop the hand-eye coordination and timing needed in striking games such as badminton, racquetball, tennis and baseball.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice striking

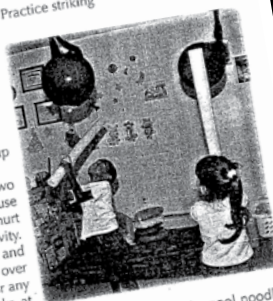
EQUIPMENT

- Round foam pool noodle bats, one per child
- Also refer to **Easy Kicking** for equipment required in this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

Refer to **Easy Kicking** instructions for setting up this activity and safety considerations.

Cut one foam pool noodle in half to make two bats. They are ideal for "batting" practice because they are light in weight, and generally won't hurt if a child is accidentally struck during the activity. Give each child a bat. Play some lively music and let the children have fun striking over and over again. Do not let children wrap pantyhose or any other rope-like materials around their necks at any time. Use a piece of pool noodle to cover the legs of the pantyhose to prevent wrapping and tangling. Slit the length of the pool noodle along one side and slip it over the pantyhose legs.



Helping Children Learn to Strike

To help children grasp the concept of starting the swing with the bat behind them, use the cue "rest the bat on your shoulder before swinging." This is a concrete cue that helps children, who may not yet understand spatial relationship cues, know where to position the bat before swinging. Yet it also can develop bad habits in children who have already mastered the basics of striking. As soon as the children can understand, switch to the cue "hold the bat behind and above your shoulder."

Cues for Learning to Strike

Just Learning: "Look at the ball." "Keep the bat on your shoulder, then swing."

More Experienced: "Stand with your side to the target." "Step forward as you swing."

Easier: At first children are likely to hack or chop at the ball. Use hand-over-hand assistance to help the children learn a level swing. Older, school-aged children could swing the bat level as they strike the ball.

Let children who have difficulty standing while striking, such as those who use wheelchairs, sit while striking. Lower tethered balls to their seated chest height.

Harder: Use less air in the balloons so they now rest on the floor. Ask the children to pretend that they are playing ice hockey or floor hockey or golf as they strike the balloons on the floor.

See appendix (page 33) for seven activities from *Active Play!*

sponsoring organizations implementation snapshots



Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

overview

The State of Alaska has eight sponsoring organizations that administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for smaller family day care homes that are licensed or approved to provide day care services in their homes. These sponsors work indirectly with children that participate in the various food programs, but provide training and resources to the day care home provider.

Of the eight sponsoring organizations, seven participated in the WIACC grant — Association for the Education of Young Children Southeast, Alaska Family Child Care Association, Community Connections, Eielson Air Force Base, Fairbanks Daycare Food Program, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, and South Peninsula Haven House Inc. Because these sponsors serve providers of family day care homes across the state the information reaches a large population of children. Many of the sponsors adopted the “train the trainer” approach in order to implement their wellness grants, and the providers received resources and training they then used in their small day care homes.



South Peninsula Haven House

South Peninsula Haven House hosted four provider trainings in order to educate their providers on Active Play! activities, the More Than Mud Pies nutrition education based curriculum, and Happy Mealtime for Healthy Kids. Active Play! manuals and family-style dining equipment were distributed during these training periods by South Peninsula Haven House's local administrator.



Outreach

South Peninsula Haven House is fairly isolated and does not have immediate access to stores, making the grant implementation process a little trickier. In order to give their providers the necessary materials to promote physical activity in their homes they had to be creative. Their local administrator created her own version of *Active Play!* in a bag. These bags were distributed on each of her home visits and in-home trainings. Each bag included colored painter's tape for balance beam simulation to play games like Alligator Pit. Nylons, balloons, string, craft paper, scissors, and paper plates were also included for such games as: swat the fly, easy kicking, easy punching, and various other activities. These small items were perfect for distributing to each provider. Because many of the items are household items, South Peninsula was able to gather several of the needed supplies through donations.



Physical Activity

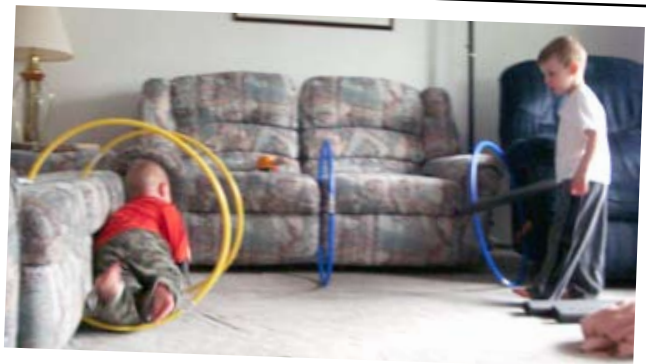
South Peninsula Haven House, for lack of purchasing options, was one of our most creative awardees: the local administrator conducted an entire provider training dedicated to creating their very own homemade hula hoop. South Peninsula purchased all of the necessary supplies and handed them out at this training. They used 1/2 inch pex tubing (like a hose, but used in residential water lines) that they cut into six-foot pieces and attached the two open ends with metal couplings to create a circle. They used fabric strips and wrapped the strips around the outside of the hula hoop. This is a very simple process, and can be done with supplies available at most local hardware stores.

Association for Education of Young Children (AEYC) Southeast

The Association for Education of Young Children Southeast (AEYC) used their grant funds to purchase supplies that were used to implement activities from Dr. Craft's Active Play! manual, as well as family-style dining to support a more educational and friendly eating environment for their providers children.



pumpkin



Obstacle Course

Nutrition Education

Since AEYC is a sponsoring organization they do not work directly with the population of children they serve. In order to teach children about nutrition education they had to first teach their family daycare home providers about good nutrition. AEYC hosted a healthy snack workshop at their annual conference in Juneau, which drew participants from all over Southeast Alaska. The snack workshop focused on different ways to present healthy foods to children with snacks that they can make themselves. Snack ideas included mini campfires made from pretzels, grapes and cheese, hummus and carrot flower pots, and honey mustard veggie dipping sauce.

Physical Activity

AEYC hosted two community events at an indoor field house in Juneau. Approximately 75 providers, parents, children and community members participated in these events. Participants were able to explore all of the activity equipment that AEYC purchased with the WIACC grant funds, including playground balls, hopping balls, hula hoops, and materials used to catch, throw, and hit. These materials directly relate to Dr. Craft's *Active Play!* book, and encouraged fun and effective active play that can be done inside or outside with both large and small groups. This physical activity workshop was not only a provider training, but an opportunity to teach the community about the importance of healthy, active lifestyles for children. After the community events were completed, providers were able to take the newly purchased equipment to their homes, so they could further to implement the WIACC best practices.



Fairbanks Daycare Food Program

The Fairbanks Day Care Food Program (FDCFP) had a wonderful year implementing the Wellness in Alaska Child Care grant. FDCFP developed a series of four workshops starting in November 2011 and continuing through June 2012.



Nutrition Education

FDCFP presented a variety of nutritious “party foods” for the daycare providers to serve to their children during the Christmas season. In addition, the FDCFP demonstrated and encouraged family-style dining. While some of the providers were apprehensive about the process, all showed a willingness to slowly work family-style dining into their meal times. The FDCFP mantra was, “start with snack and the rest of the meals will follow.” They encouraged and demonstrated physical activities that could be done in the home by providing resources and hands-on activities at all of their workshops.

The most well-received component of the WIACC grant for FDCFP was the Farm to Child Care grant. Sixty-five percent of providers attended their open house, which was used to distribute materials to create container gardens. The open house also gave providers the opportunity to have a master gardener from the Fairbanks Water Conservation Society teach them about how to garden with kids. FDCFP administrators have seen the progress of their providers’ gardens during home visits, and the children loved the gardening experience. They drew several pictures of their gardens, and were even able to sample some of the tasty harvest. A FDCFP administrator said, “During our home visits the children couldn’t stop talking about their plants!”



Air Force Base

Eielson Air Force Base conducted a series of provider trainings focused on nutrition education and physical activity. The WIACC grant helped their children reach a goal of self-sufficiency by improving their self-esteem, social skills, gross motor skills and literacy skills.



Cutting strawberries



Nature walk

Physical Activity

For staff and children of Eielson Air Force Base, the *Active Play!* manual was a gift that just kept giving. Eielson enjoyed the *Active Play!* activities so much that they decided to host a “Get Your Moovooove On-Skillathon” as a way to feature these activities with providers, children, and families of Eielson. They filled their gym with various activity stations, and parents were able to walk around and experience each activity first-hand with their kids. The event was a big hit with families of the Eielson community.

Nutrition Education

One nutrition education activity that was well received by Eielson’s children was called “Portion Plate.” Eielson staff created an example of what a plate should look like, with correct portion sizes, and then the kids were able to take magnetic foods and mats to create their own healthy meals. Kids freely talked about which fruits and vegetables were their favorites, which ones they liked the least, and why they were all healthy.



Parent night

Community Connections

Community Connections chose to focus most of their attention on family-style dining, and allocated most of their grant funds to family-style dining equipment for each of their providers. They also did a two-part series of provider trainings.



Family-Style Dining

Community Connections was able to purchase family-style dining equipment for all of their providers using WIACC funds. Having the right equipment made it easier for providers to implement family-style dining. Newly purchased child-size cups with handles allowed providers to get most of their 2-and 3-year-old children off of sippy cups. Child-size serving utensils also seemed to help. They inspired providers to allow the children to begin serving themselves at meal times. One provider reported, “They love using their new utensils to dish-up their food, and you can tell how proud the children are when they are able to serve themselves with grown-up utensils.” Through the WIACC grant Community Connections was able to purchase for each child his or her own child-size serving utensils, plates, cups and bowls, which helped prevent arguments amongst the children.

Nutrition Education

Several Community Connection providers have used the *More Than Mud Pies* in order to implement nutrition education in their child care programs. One provider had a Dr. Seuss day; the children dressed up as their favorite Dr. Seuss characters, and green eggs and ham were served family-style! This same provider designates two helpers a day that get to play chef. These helpers get to wear the special chef hat and apron, and assist with setting the table prior to each meal time. According to the provider, the children take this job very seriously, and they’re always eager to help.

Provider Training

Community Connections conducted two provider trainings that focused on healthy eating and physical activity. The first training was “Let’s Grow Let’s Move,” and it focused on physical activity and was conducted with the help of AEYC Southeast. The second provider training was a nutritious snack best practices training that was conducted with the help of a WIC representative. This workshop focused on foods that give children adequate amounts of energy for the day.

The Alaska Family Child Care Food Program

The Alaska Family Child Care Food Program is Alaska's largest sponsoring organization. Alaska Family conducted two different trainings five times each in order to reach all of their providers and hand-out all of the resources they purchased.

Active Play! Training

The first set of trainings that Alaska Family conducted was focused on *Active Play!*. This was a two-hour training that discussed the importance of physical activity and how certain games from Dr. Craft's *Active Play!* manual can enhance different types of fundamental movement skills. One of the five trainings was conducted in Spanish in order to meet all of their individual providers' needs. Several games from *Active play!* such as Clean up the Floor, Swat the Fly, Alligator Pit, and Easy Striking/Kicking were demonstrated for the providers. At the end of each training providers were able to take home resources that would help them implement physical activity and movement in their child care programs. Such resources include: balls, frisbees, pantyhose, balloons, pipe insulation, an *Active Play!* manual, and one of Dr. Hap Palmer's CDs *Learning Basic Skills Through Music*. Each of these items helped the providers' implement the games with the children in their care.

Healthy Meal Times Training

The second set of trainings was focused on *Healthy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids*. This was also a two-hour training that stressed the importance of family-style dining and healthy meals. Five trainings on this topic were conducted, one of which was conducted in Spanish. The trainer showed a video of family-style dining being done incorrectly, and attendees had to point out which aspects of the meal time were being implemented incorrectly. They then showed a video of family-style dining being implemented correctly.

Each provider received a set of eight magnets that discussed the importance of family-style meals. These magnets were distributed to all children in their care so that they could take them home and share them with their parents. Providers also received eight MyPlate placemats, a set of child-size serving utensils, bowls, plates and pouring pitchers. These materials allowed them to better implement family-style dining in their homes.





Child Care Center implementation snapshots

Hillcrest Children's Center



Family-Style Dining

Hillcrest's preschool children really seemed to enjoy family-style dining. Some of the WIACC grant funds were used to purchase child-size family-style dining equipment—child-size pouring pitchers, utensils, bowls, plates, and cups. The staff found that it was a great way to teach portion control and sharing. Children are able to select what food they want to eat and the amount of food, and strengthen their basic gross motor skills when passing bowls of food to one another.

Staff and Parent Outreach

Hillcrest kicked off the WIACC grant by conducting a staff training on NFSMI's *More Than Mud Pies* and Dr. Craft's *Active Play!* manual. They incorporated *Active Play!* activities and newly purchased WIACC grant equipment into their annual family barbecue in order to get parents on board with physical activity and nutrition education.

Nutrition Education

Children and teachers read the book *I Will Never Not Eat a Tomato*, and then drew pictures about the story. One parent donated green tomatoes and the children made fried green tomatoes with a skillet set-up in their classrooms. Almost all of the children tried the tomatoes, though few children liked them. Most of the activities Hillcrest conducted were hands-on. Hillcrest staff found that this kinesthetic approach helped the children remember the things they learned.

The children were able to actively participate in cultivating their own vegetables, allowing them to learn what certain produce items look like in their original form. They were then able to create meals with these homegrown produce items. Cooking can be a scientific experiment that you eat, and through this experiment the children of Hillcrest were able to learn the different sources of food, how they grow, and how they can be prepared. Simple nutrition education activities like this not only educate children about what food looks like in its original form, but through preparing the food themselves they learn new vocabulary, basic quantity concepts such as measuring, and basic food safety awareness, in addition to improving gross motor skills.

Hillcrest Handy Hint: Child care centers and parents should subscribe to *Chop Chop* magazine. It's filled with good cooking ideas for children!



Rock of Ages Daycare

Parent Involvement

Rock of Ages Daycare actively involved and educated the parents on the WIACC grant process and their goals. They provided parents with an informational newsletter that explained how to eat healthy on a budget, as well as some tips, tricks, and information on the benefits of family-style dining. Rock of Ages noticed that children's desire to eat certain foods increased as parent involvement with their children's meal times increased. Almost every physical activity and nutrition education activity had these elements of parent involvement.

Physical Activity

Rock of Ages was able to purchase a large parachute, jump ropes, soccer balls, hula hoops, and other miscellaneous materials for the implementation of physical activity and *Active Play!* activities. The children loved the games they were able to play with their parachute, and Dr. Craft's Alligator Pit seemed to be a favorite. Rock of Ages now plays Alligator Pit and Swat the Fly at least once a week. Rock of Ages staff said, "Children love the new games we play, and they really help burn off built-up energy!"



Nutrition Education

Rock of Ages children made "food cards" with the help of staff. These cards list foods on one side, with "healthy choice"/"unhealthy choice" on the back side. The center uses these flash-cards to teach kids which foods are healthy and which foods are unhealthy. At the end of each day the children took home the "food cards" they created so they could practice with their parents too.

Rock of Ages worked hard to get their parents actively involved in cooking with their children. Children made a recipe book of their favorite healthy recipes to take home and share with their families. Children were even able to sample some of their favorite recipe items from the Rock of Ages garden, also funded by the WIACC grant. This will aid in the development of the children's preference for foods that are homegrown, and teach them how food gets from its original form to their plates. It's also a great way to incorporate healthy foods into some of their favorite recipes!



Tanaina

Child Development Center

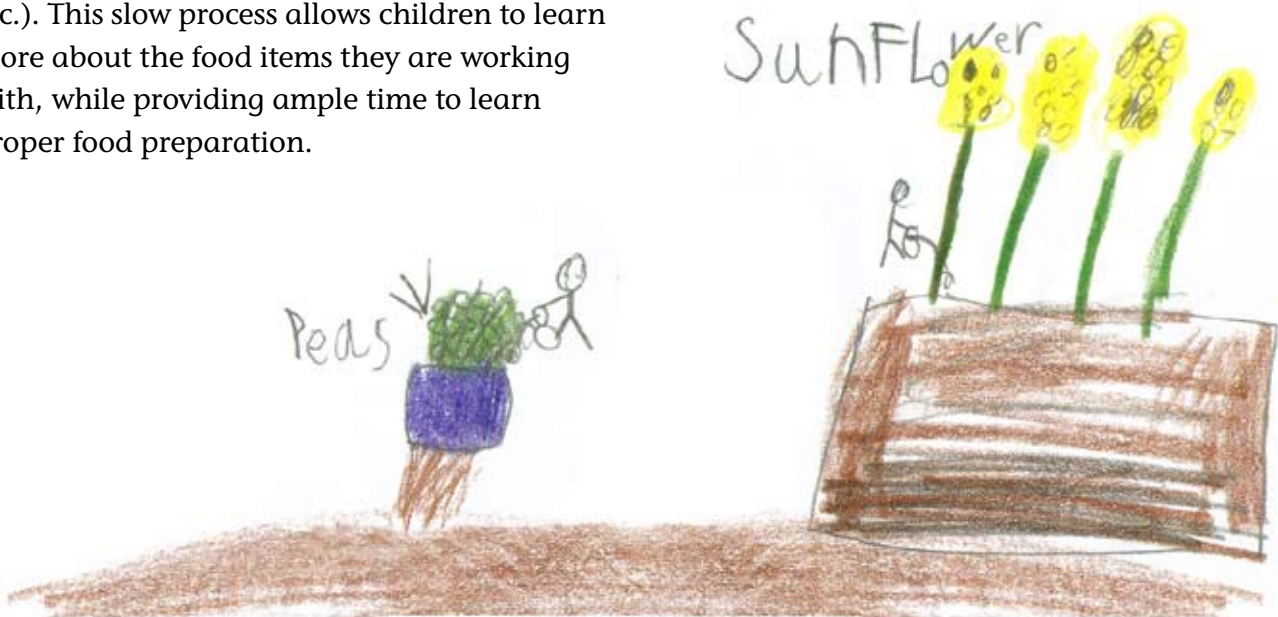
Tanaina Child Development Center kicked-off the grant by hosting a staff in-service that focused on developing activities to facilitate outdoor play and to promote gross motor development with their toddlers and preschoolers. Teachers worked together to create activities that could then be incorporated in the classroom.

Physical Activity

Tanaina CDC had students come in from an Anchorage elementary school in order to promote literacy within their center. The reading buddies also turned into their physical activity buddies. After reading books with their elementary-aged friends, children at Tanaina would grab their buddy and head outdoors. Staff at Tanaina created an outdoor curriculum involving long walks around their campus. These walks included spurts of walking, running, skipping, crouching, sneaking, and dancing. These walks were specially geared toward developing young children's basic gross motor skills.

Nutrition Education

Tanaina values healthy cooking, so each teacher implements cooking activities into his or her year-round curriculum. The fall season provided Tanaina with numerous opportunities to conduct such activities. The children prepared apple pies and applesauce from crab apples that grow on their playground. They were also able to explore pumpkins by cutting them, baking the seeds, and making pumpkin pies. These activities usually span a week or two because they greatly emphasize this step-by-step preparation (harvesting the apples, cleaning the apples, cutting and peeling the apples, etc.). This slow process allows children to learn more about the food items they are working with, while providing ample time to learn proper food preparation.



Enep'ut

Children's Center

Nutrition Education

Enep'ut conducted two weeks of daily nutrition-based lessons on healthy eating, USDA's "My Plate", and proper table manners. During each lunch session teachers would lead discussions about the different food groups while the children enjoyed their healthy meals—family-style!



*Showing off
prize zucchini*



Zucchini Zeke

In addition, Enep'ut planted a garden containing tomato, marigold, basil, lettuce, chives, parsley, spearmint, lemon mint, purple cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, nasturtium, carrot, green onion, and sweet pepper. All of the gardening materials were purchased with the WIACC grant funds they received. The garden has been the focal point of several other nutrition education activities. They have had lessons on where food comes from and how plants grow. On nice days, the children often go sit out in the garden and sketch what they see. So far, the students have harvested and served two salads from their garden. Enep'ut Children's Center grew a giant zucchini, which they named Zeke. Zeke was the main attraction for the children at Enep'ut because of his enormous size. They decorated him and entered him in the Tanana Valley Fair in the "Food as Art" category and won second prize!

At the beginning of summer, Enep'ut's pre-school children were given the opportunity to plant one sunflower seed each in a pot of their own. They cared for them all summer, watching them grow until they became too big for their original seed containers. Staff explained to the pre-schoolers that plants can get "root-bound" and need more room to grow. The children understood this concept, and helped in the repotting process. They avidly watched their sunflowers grow, often giving their teachers exciting updates.



USCG Kodiak

Child Development Center (CDC)



Girl enjoys fresh radishes

Physical Activity

Since the WIACC grant began, the Kodiak CDC has emphasized physical activity and nutrition on a regular basis. February 2012 was “Healthy Bodies: Fitness and Nutrition” month. They did a series of physical activities throughout the month, while also hosting a mini-olympics at the end of February to wrap-up their month of fitness and nutrition-based curriculum. Mini-olympic highlights included a jog-a-thon, jump rope, weight-lifting (made from old milk jugs and sand), bowling (made with cardboard and foam balls), and a healthy foods bean bag toss. Many of the activities were created using recycled items, so they could be easily duplicated by participants in their home. The children of Kodiak CDC loved their month of fitness and nutrition-based activities.

Community Outreach

Shortly after the spring 2011 regional WIACC trainings, the Kodiak CDC participated in a local children’s fair. They used this as an opportunity to educate the Kodiak community about the importance of physical activity in the lives of children. Several *Active Play!* activities were demonstrated, and educational brochures about the importance of physical activity were made available for parents and attendees to take home.

Nutrition Education

Kodiak CDC hosted a “healthy foods tasting party” as a way of implementing nutrition education. Each classroom prepared its own healthy foods for the party. The toddler room made a rainbow out of bite-size fruit pieces; the preschool room made a yogurt parfait, and the pre-k room made edible sculptures out of vegetables. The children loved that they were not only able to create their own dishes to share, but also able to try new fruits and vegetables.

Farm to Child Care

With the help of the Farm to Child Care grant, USCG Kodiak CDC planted a variety of seeds and seedlings in their garden. Several of the seeds and seedlings flourished during the warm summer months, and the children were able to harvest pumpkins, zucchini, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, radishes, beets, peas, potatoes, swiss chard, lettuce, and lots of nasturtiums. The children helped with the general upkeep of the garden and were excited to come in every day to see how the garden developed.

In late July the kids were finally able to harvest their radishes. The Kodiak CDC’s cook helped the kids wash and cut the radishes. They were served raw! The Kodiak CDC thought this was a great opportunity for all of the children. It’s not often that children get to grow their own foods, and taste their final product.

Imagination Station

Family Style Dining

Imagination Station has been using family-style dining with their children 3 years and older for several years.

However, after receiving training focused on family-style dining they decided to implement it with their 2-year-olds as well. With WIACC grant funds they were able to purchase small, lighter child-size cups. Since the purchase of the cups they have been able to get two toddler rooms completely off of sippy cups. They have also purchased child-size serving utensils so the children can easily serve themselves. Imagination Station reported that the children love serving themselves, and seem to feel more independent and in control of the food they eat. Staff found that with patience and practice the 2-year-olds were able to pour their own milk, serve themselves, and pass food to one another.



Farm to Child Care

Imagination Station used funds from the Farm to Child Care grant to create their very own on-site garden. The garden became the centerpiece of their nutrition education activities. In the spring of 2012 they purchased various fruits and vegetables for the children to transplant. They held a parent lunch with plenty of healthy snacks and the parents helped their children transplant all of the fruits and vegetables. All participants loved the activity. The children participated in the upkeep of the garden all summer, and were able to learn several things about healthy eating from their garden.

At each meal time the children identify each fruit and vegetable on their plate, and thanks to their garden, they've been able to try several fruits and vegetables in their raw form. Imagination Station staff stated, "Children seemed more inclined to try new food now that they have seen where their food comes from, how they can identify each food, and what they should call it."

Petersburg

Children's Center

Farm to Child Care

The preschoolers at the Petersburg Children's Center have been having a blast this summer planting vegetables and herbs. From carrots and radishes to basil and thyme, they have been avid planters. Perhaps more importantly, the children have been fully involved in the process from the very beginning. They learned how to get the starter boxes prepped, soak the various seeds, plant the soaked seeds and then transfer them to the garden box.

According to the Petersburg Children's Center pre-school teacher, "All of the gardening around our school has truly sparked their interest in all things flora, as well as their sense of responsibility in helping to keep our starters and garden



flourishing. Every morning they come in eager to see how much our starters have grown and changed since they last saw them." The children frequently check to see if watering is needed, and eagerly volunteer to help rehydrate their garden.

Teachers at the Petersburg Children's Center have been avidly observing the successes and failures of their first venture into a large garden at their school, not to mention sharing in the joy of the process with the children. They have been diligently taking notes to improve the process for next summer, and are excited that they were able to participate in the Farm to Child Care grant as it greatly enriched the curriculum at their center.



Chugachmiut

Head Start



Hands-on activity with squash

Physical Activity

Children have been introduced to many activities in the classroom, including Dr. Craft's "Clean up the Floor" game, a favorite at their Nanwalek site. Children at the Seldovia site enjoy daily yoga, while children at the Port Graham site love the new scoot boards they were able to purchase with WIACC grant funds. Due to inclement weather in the winter, games such as "All Stop and Go to Music" and "Music and Movement" have become popular activities. They are simple games and don't require a lot of space or supplies.

Nutrition Education

Staff at Chugachmiut Head Start conduct bi-weekly nutrition education activities with the children. These activities range from cooking activities to food tasting parties. Chugachmiut created a nutrition education activity worksheet that teachers complete for each bi-weekly nutrition activity that is conducted at each site. It lists the supplies needed, which activity they did, and what the children liked the best. Staff are also required to check the type of activity that was conducted (cooking, discussion groups, games, gardening, taste testing, etc.). Staff at each Head Start then submit their nutrition education activity worksheets to the Chugachmiut director monthly for review, which ensures that all staff are completing nutrition education activities on a weekly basis.



RurAL CAP

Head Start

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) is one of Alaska's largest Head Start organizations, with 26 sites located throughout the state. RurAL CAP has been implementing principles of the WIACC best practices for years, so this grant provided them with additional resources to further implement physical activity and nutrition education.



Physical Activity

Various supplies were purchased for each of RurAL CAP's sites so that indoor physical activities could be conducted more frequently and with greater ease. One of their larger purchases was stepping stones for each site. These stepping stones are actually plastic, and can be laid out throughout a classroom. Children can step, skip, hop, or jump from stone to stone. Combining the stepping stones with music and movement is another fun way to implement this activity. The stepping stones are simple, but they direct a child's movement and help with balance. Many of the RurAL CAP sites reported that the stepping stones have become a daily activity.

Nutrition Education

Most of RurAL CAP's sites had previously been conducting nutrition education activities at least once a week, but after the grant began a few sites increased their activities to at least 2–3 times per week. Such activities include: cleaning and gutting cultural fish, growing orange seeds and plotting their growth, preparing yams, and creating playdough out of edible materials. Each of these activities is guaranteed to increase children's gross motor development, teach them about basic quantity concepts, and enrich their vocabulary. It was reported that the children loved the new activities, and staff noticed that they seemed more responsible and apt to assist with the clean-up process for cooking activities.

Responses and Evaluations

Training Evaluations

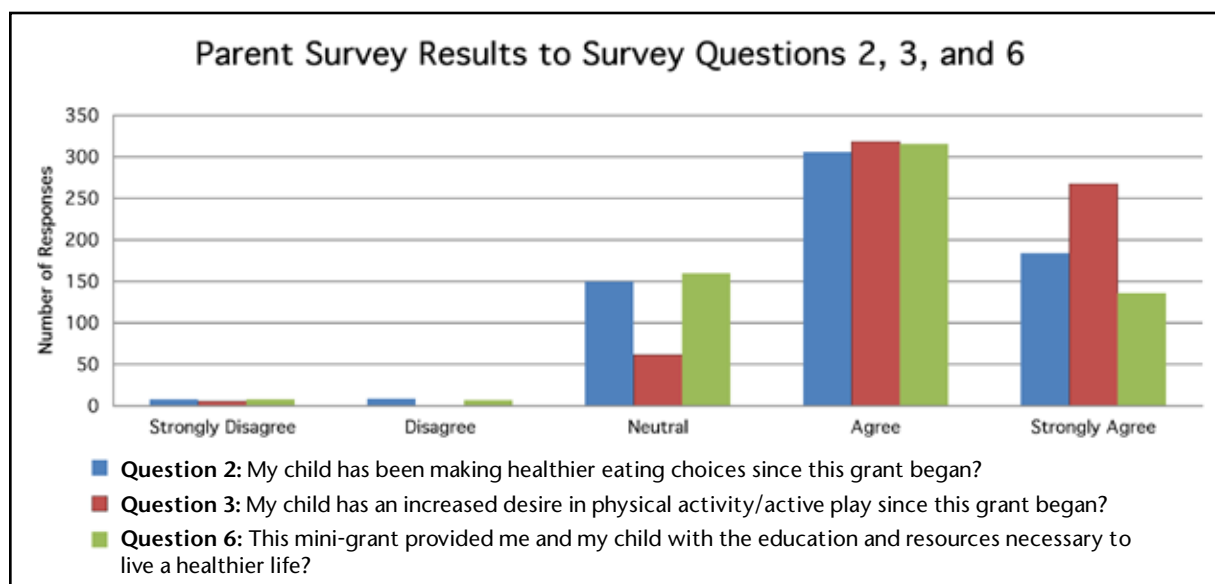
The trainings attracted attendees from child care centers, Head Starts, and sponsoring organizations from across Alaska. The three regional trainings had about 138 attendees from 74 different child care organizations. The trainings had an overall rating average of 4.89 out of 5 (1 meaning they strongly disagreed and didn't find the trainings helpful, and 5 meaning they strongly agreed and found the trainings to be helpful). Many of the recipients said they would definitely attend this training in the future, and that the activities were amazing, low-cost, adaptable, and easy to implement in any space.

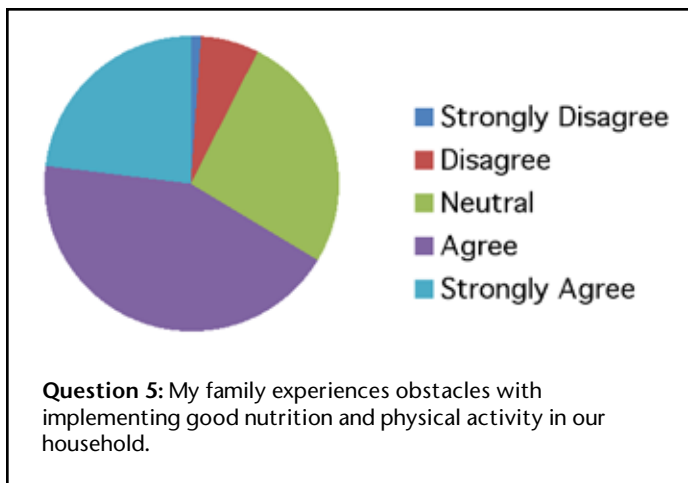
Parent Evaluations

Parent evaluations were handed out toward the end of the mini-grant to each grant awardee in order to determine the grant's success; over 650 parent surveys were returned. Seventy-five percent of the parents who returned a survey said that their child has been making healthier eating choices since this grant was implemented at their child's daycare center—only two percent said they disagreed and

saw no changes in their child's eating habits. Ninety percent of the parents who returned a survey said their child had an increased desire to participate in physical activity, and only one percent said they disagreed. Many parents felt that their child needed to be educated in good nutrition and physical activity (sixty-seven percent agreed and only eleven percent felt that their child didn't need to be educated in these areas). Twenty-two percent of the parents surveyed felt like implementing good nutrition and physical activity in their household was difficult. Many parents feel like their schedules are very busy, and they often don't have the time for additional exercise or to plan and make healthy meals. It was also noted that money and inclement weather were often a factor in their food choices and activity levels. Overall, sixty-nine percent of parents surveyed felt like the grant provided their child(ren) with the education and resources necessary to live a healthier life. Twenty-four percent of the parents surveyed were neutral on the subject, and only two percent disagreed.

Many parents had wonderful things to say about their care providers, the activities they were conducting, and the nutrition and physical education they were providing to their kids. Several parents expressed that they feel the nutrition education aspect is important, especially in the early years when children tend to be picky. Many of





the parents felt like they need to be better educated on the things that their children are learning and on the food program so they are able to reinforce healthy lifestyles at home.

Participant Evaluations

A requirement of the mini-grant was that all grant participants take part in an outcome evaluation at the end of the grant period. Eighty-four percent of the grant participants found that the family-style dining, *Active Play!*, and *More Than Mud Pies* activities they introduced were well-received by the children in their care. Grant participants noticed that children really enjoyed the *Active Play!* activities, especially Swat the Fly, Bubble Wrap Jumping, Clean the Room and Feed the Penguin. A few participants found that the physical activity lessons were better received by their preschool-aged children, while the *More Than Mud Pies* activities were better received by their school age children. Eighty-six percent of the grant participants thought that the activities introduced by this grant helped the children develop their fundamental movement skills (fourteen percent were neutral on the subject), and seventy-six percent felt the children were making healthier eating choices on their own (twenty-three percent were neutral). Several providers commented that their children were being more physically active, had better motor skills, and a stronger interest to get out and move. Cooking also seemed to be a big hit with the children. Several participants reported that the children began asking

to cook healthy foods daily, and requested that they do cooking activities more often.

Food preparation and cooking provide children with a sense of personal achievement as they meet their own food needs, and it allows them to create and produce real food that other people will eat. It's a good hands-on tool for learning and they are able to enrich their vocabulary by learning new words such as stir, blend, beat, grind, melt, knead, and melt. Cooking also allows children to develop a basic understanding of quantity concepts, motor skills, safety awareness, and scientific concepts. Cooking is an easy activity that can be done at home or in a child care setting at very little to no cost that is guaranteed to educate the child in a fun, safe, and social setting.

While some participants found the grant difficult to implement or the reporting requirements to be onerous, all of the participants who remained dedicated to the grant agreed that if given the opportunity they would do the grant again in the future. One of the biggest challenges with this grant was staff turnover and staff training. Several participants said it was hard to keep staff motivated throughout the entire grant period. Teacher aides were often resistant to get involved, and some staff were not very receptive to the grant, which made it difficult to implement at times.

Occasionally, staff lacked motivation because they do not understand the general concept of what they're supposed to be doing. Many of the WIACC participants conducted multiple staff trainings in order to convey grant information in a clear and concise way. Staff trainings ensured that all of the staff are aware of the goals and project objectives. Both physical activity and nutrition education lessons can be taught in ways that encourage hands-on activities, which force people to be actively involved and engaged in the activity at hand, and they are likely to retain more information. If staff participation and training are a problem, conducting a series of hands-on staff workshops could help. Nutrition education and physical activity can be fun for almost anyone, as long as it's presented well.

Grant Recipients

AEYC—Southeast

Juneau
Wrangell
Haines

APIA Head Start

King Cove
Sand Point
St. Paul
Unalaska

Alaska Family Child Care Association

Greater Anchorage area

Anchorage Vineyard Early Learning Center

Anchorage

BBNA Head Start

Dillingham
Manokotak
New Stuyahok
Togiak

Big Lake Christian Learning Center

Big Lake

B&G Club of the Kenai Peninsula

Greater Kenai area

B&G Club of Southcentral Alaska

Anchorage

Bright Beginning

Anchorage

CCS Puddle Jumpers

Juneau

Child's Early Learning

Anchorage

Chugachmiut Head Start

Nanwalek
Port Graham
Seldovia

Community Connections, Inc.

Ketchikan

Craig Child Care Center

Craig

Eielson AFB Greater Area

Greater Fairbanks area

Enep'ut Children's Center

Fairbanks

Fairbanks Daycare Food Program

Greater Fairbanks area

Ft. Greely Child Care

Ft. Greely

Hillcrest Children's Center

Anchorage

Illuminations Child Care

Wasilla

Imagination Station

Anchorage

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

Anchorage

Joy Child Development Center

Anchorage

Ketchikan Medical Center Child Care

Ketchikan

Little Red Schoolhouse

Anchorage

Petersburg Children's Center

Petersburg

Rainbow's End Children's Center

North Pole

Ray's Child Care

Palmer

Robertson' Ent. (Carousel Child Care)

Anchorage

Rock of Ages Daycare

Wasilla

RurAL CAP Head Start

Anchorage

Akiak

Alakanuk

Chevak

Emmonak

Haines

Homer

Hooper Bay

Hydaburg

Kake

Ketchikan

Kluti-Kaah

Kodiak

Marshall Village

Mt. Village

Napaskiak

RurAL CAP Head Start cont.

Nunapitchuk
Pilot Station
Saint Mary's
Savoogna
Selawik
Stebbins
Sterling
Tok
Toksook Bay

South Peninsula Haven House Inc.

Homer
Kodiak
Soldotna
Kenai
Seward
Nikolaevsk

Tainaina Child Development Center

Anchorage

Tanana Chiefs Head Start

Ft. Yukon
Grayling
Huslia
Kaltag
Little Sragay
McGrath
Nenana
Tanana

Tlingit & Haida Head Start

Angoon
Craig
Hoonah
Juneau
Klawock
Petersburg
Saxman
Sitka
Wrangell
Yakutat

USCG Kodiak Child Development Center

Kodiak

Resources

1. **Head Start Body Start:** This website is designed for Head Start Programs by the Association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. It has various activity resources, success stories, grant opportunities, and activity calendars available that would work at a number of child care facilities.
<http://www.aahperd.org/headstartbodystart/>
2. **USDA Team Nutrition:** This website was created by USDA to promote their Team Nutrition grant, but it has many wonderful resources that will help promote healthy eating and physical activity among children.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>
3. **NFSMI** is the National Food Service Management Institute. They provide a variety of free resources and trainings for child nutrition programs that are focused on healthy eating and physical activity. Many of their resources align with USDA regulations and requirements.
<http://nfsmi.org/>
4. **Environments Inc.** is an early childhood equipment store that sells a wide variety of child-size family-style dining equipment, physical activity equipment, dramatic and pretend play equipment, and various other nutrition education resources. We highly recommend this website for family-style dining equipment.
www.eichild.com
5. **The National Farm to School Network** is a program that connects schools (K-12) and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers. The Alaska CACFP launched its own version of this called "Farm to Child Care." If you're interested in implementing a farm to table concept at your child care facility we suggest taking a look at the Farm to School webpage for ideas and tips!
www.farmtoschool.org
6. **Team Nutrition's Grow it, Try it, Like it:** The Grow it, Try it, Like it kits are garden-themed nutrition education kits for child care center staff that introduce children to: three fruits (peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe) and three vegetables (spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash). The kit includes booklet, activities, and CD with supplemental information.
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html>

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Appendix

CLEAN OUT THE BACKYARD: KICKING

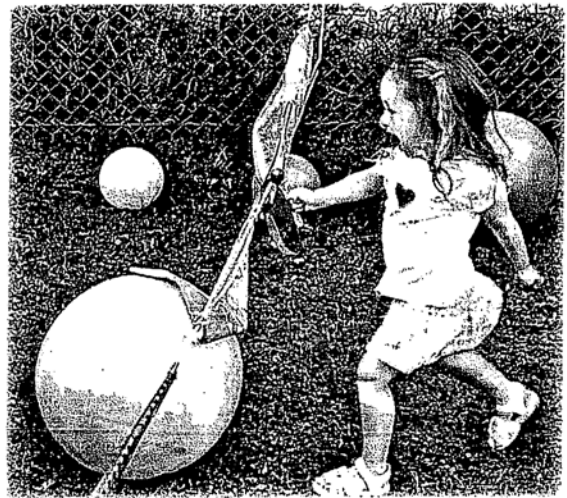


Children will get plenty of practice when you dump a bunch of soft rubber balls and let them clean up the backyard - kicking!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice kicking • Develop cardiovascular endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Soft rubber balls of different sizes, at least 3 per child
Indoors use empty plastic gallon milk jugs instead of balls
- A barrier made from a length of rope draped with sheets, lightweight towels, or bright cartoon character fabric
- Sleigh bells or other noisemakers (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the play area into half with the rope and fabric barrier. Keep the barrier about three feet off the ground. Hang bells or other noisemakers from the rope for excitement. Dump the same number of balls on each side of the barrier.

Start with an equal number of children on each side of the barrier. Tell the children to kick any balls on their side under the barrier to the other side. The goal is to get all the balls on the other side of the barrier. Hold the hands of younger children to provide the balance they need while learning to kick.

Some children might kick a ball with enough force that it could hurt someone. Give that child a separate and more challenging kicking task. Have him kick the ball as hard as possible across the yard to see how far it goes. Do not allow any child to play **Clean Out the Backyard** in a way that another child could get hurt.

Cues for Learning to Kick

Just Learning: "Stop and step next to the ball." "Look at the ball as you kick it."

More Experienced: "Bring your leg back and then kick." "Kick hard."

Easier: This activity works with most children, regardless of their kicking skills.

Harder: For school-aged children, tie a ribbon around the leg they do not usually kick with. Tell them to kick only with the leg that has the ribbon.

BUBBLE WRAP JUMPING

Inspired by Renée McCall

View On
DVD

Tape some bubble wrap to the floor and every child will want to jump until all the bubbles are popped!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice jumping • Develop cardiovascular endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Bubble wrap, at least a 10 ft. length, 24 inches wide

Equipment Tip: 1/2 in. bubbles pop best. Ask adults to save wrap for this activity. Some businesses will donate wrap, if asked.

- Clear packaging tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the wrap to the floor so it won't slip. Don't let children mouth or bite the bubble wrap. Instruct the children to move in only one direction when jumping the length of the wrap. No return trips with more than one child jumping at the same time! Or tape a square piece of wrap to the floor for each child if you want them to jump in place.

Show children how to bend their knees and lift with their arms when they jump. Turn on lively music with a strong 4/4 beat to encourage children to jump to the music!

Cues for Learning to Jump for Distance

Just Learning: "Bend your knees." "Start with your arms behind you." "Swing your arms forward as you jump." "Land on both feet at the same time."

More Experienced: "Reach up and out (at a 45° angle) as you jump." "Fall forward when you land." Refer to **On/Off** to learn more jumping cues.

Easier: Hold smaller children's hands for extra balance. Allow children with developmental delays to walk if they are not yet ready to jump.

Harder: Tape 2 ft. squares short distances apart and have school-aged children jump from square to square.

Variety: Have the children walk a 'balance beam' made from a 6 in. wide, 10 ft. long strip of bubble wrap taped to the floor.



ALLIGATOR PIT

Suggested by Dana DeCarlo



Crossing an alligator pit on a narrow balance beam is a thrilling challenge for children! The alligator pit is really your floor, the balance beam is a flat foam pool noodle, and the alligator is you!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice stability

EQUIPMENT

- A 'balance beam' made from two pieces of flat foam pool noodle sections, joined at ends and taped to the floor. Masking tape lines on the carpet will also work.
- Basket
- Many safe objects to carry, such as socks, beanbags, foam puzzle pieces, and pieces of foam cut from pool noodles.
- Duct tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the balance beam to the floor. Place the basket at the far end of the balance beam. Have plenty of small toys and other safe objects for the children to carry at the near end of the beam. Tell the children where



alligators live and what they eat. The children's job is to walk the beam, and put things into the basket at the other end of the beam. Explain that the alligator who lives in the pit will not bother the children as long as they stay on the beam and don't drop anything that they are carrying. If they drop something, or step off the beam, the alligator will chase them until they drop everything they are carrying in the basket.

Give each child one item to carry across the beam and drop in the basket. After each child has gone once, increase what each must carry. Vary the skills. Ask children to carry beanbags balanced on their heads and shoulders. Have them jump across with foam blocks between their knees. Let them walk backwards across the beam with arms full of socks. When children drop objects into the pit, or step off the beam, chase them and move your extended arms up and down like an alligator's jaws. School-aged children might enjoy playing the part of the alligator during this activity.

Harder: Give the children more things to carry and harder ways of moving to make this activity more challenging. Tape a curved line on the floor as the balance beam to increase difficulty.

Variety: Pretend that floor spots are 'lily pads.' Arrange spots on the floor and let the children pretend they are frogs that must step, jump or hop from lily pad to lily pad across the alligator pit.

CLEAN OUT THE BACKYARD: THROWING

View On
DVD

This activity gives children lots of practice throwing and it's really fun!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice throwing • Cardiovascular Endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Many soft balls, fuzzy dice, or rolled socks, at least 5 per child
- A barrier made from a length of rope draped with sheets, lightweight towels, or bright cartoon character fabric
- Sleigh bells or other noisemakers (optional)
- Laundry basket to hold balls after activity (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the play area into half with the rope and fabric barrier. Keep the barrier about three feet off the ground. Hang bells or other noisemakers from the rope for excitement. Dump the same number of balls on each side of the barrier.

Start with an equal number of children on each side of the barrier. Tell the children to throw any balls on their side over the barrier to the other side. The goal is to get all the balls on the other side of the barrier.

Do not allow children to throw directly at another child's face.

Focus on the Throw, not on Hitting the Target

When helping children learn to throw, focus first on the way in which they are throwing (process) rather than throwing for distance or accuracy (product). In several of the activities in this book, such as **Sock the Cans** and **Sock'n Smiley**, children are throwing at a target. When leading these activities, make the target very large and place it close enough to the children so they can hit it often, even though they are not very accurate at throwing. Use the target only to give some purpose to their throwing, but avoid putting the emphasis on actually hitting the target regularly. Instead, give the children encouragement and feedback on the way in which they are throwing, not on how many targets they can hit. It is difficult to develop a mature throwing technique when preoccupied with hitting the target.



Stages of Throwing

At first, children only move their throwing arm. The rest of the body does not move as they throw. After determining which hand the child usually uses for throwing, ask the child to take a stance with the foot opposite the throwing hand in front of the body. This stance prompts the child to throw using a more advanced technique. As children become better at throwing, they consistently step forward as they throw. But they step forward on the 'wrong' foot. This means that a child who throws with the right arm will step forward with the right foot. Conversely, a child who throws with the left arm will step forward with the left foot. Prompt children to step forward with the foot *opposite* their throwing arm. This is the mature way to throw.

Cues for Learning to Throw

Just Learning: "Look at the target." "Bring the ball to your ear before you throw." "Start with this foot in front" referring to the foot opposite the throwing arm. "Step as you throw." "Point at the target" as you release the ball.

More Experienced: "Stand with your side to the target." "Throw as hard as you can."

Rubber Band Hand and Tape Toe - Suggested by Craig Learn

Place a rubber band on the wrist of the child's throwing arm. Place a piece of tape on the toe of the foot opposite the throwing arm. Prompt the child to throw with the 'rubber band hand' and step with the 'tape toe.'

Easier: Young children can stand next to the barrier and drop objects over. Children with limited mobility can sit next to the barrier and drop the soft objects over.

Harder: Challenge school-aged throwers to see how far back they can stand to throw and still get objects over the barrier.

Variety: Suspend the rope barrier at a height that is over the children's head, drape it with two or more sheets to completely block the view of the other side of the barrier, then have the children throw. It is surprising and funny to see the soft objects come flying 'out of nowhere' from the other side of the barrier. Be sure to stand so that you can see all of the children on both sides of the barrier at all times.

EASY CATCHING



It takes lots of practice before a young child can catch a tossed ball. Make it easier to learn how to grasp by gently swinging a suspended ball into the child's outstretched arms.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice catching

EQUIPMENT

- A large, soft ball or a punch ball balloon. Punch ball balloons are much thicker and stronger than party balloons.
- One pair of pantyhose

Equipment Tip: Stretch the large top part of the pantyhose over a large, soft ball. If using a punch ball balloon, place the deflated balloon inside the open end of the pantyhose, and inflate until it fits snugly. Be sure the balloon is completely covered within the pantyhose. Tie off or cover the end of the pantyhose to prevent balloon pieces from escaping should a balloon burst.



INSTRUCTIONS

Hold the two toes of the pantyhose in one hand, so the ball end of the pantyhose is suspended off the floor or ground. Gently swing the ball toward the child's outstretched arms until he grasps it. Repeat this catching activity several times, but stop before he loses interest. When he can catch the swung ball easily, try tossing him a soft, fuzzy ball for further catching practice. School-aged children might help by tossing balls to younger children.

Cues for Learning to Catch

Just Learning: "Arms out" prompt children to stand with arms outstretched in front, ready to catch. "Look at the ball."

More Experienced: Aid timing by saying "Ready, catch." Prompt to "Catch with soft hands," or "Give with the ball." "Watch the ball all the way into your hands."

Easier: Lower the ball slowly into the child's outstretched arms until he becomes familiar with grasping the ball.

Harder: For school-aged children, toss a ball that is not held inside pantyhose. Increase the distance the ball is tossed when the child can catch most tosses. Prompt to "Move to the ball."

Variety: Change the size of the ball. Use different balls, such as a beach balls, fabric balls, or playground rubber balls. Suspend the pantyhose from a tree branch or a door frame. Have the child push the ball and catch it as it returns.

EASY STRIKING

View On
DVD

Striking balloons with foam pool noodle bats helps children develop the hand-eye coordination and timing needed in striking games such as badminton, racquetball, tennis and baseball.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice striking

EQUIPMENT

- Round foam pool noodle bats, one per child
- Also refer to **Easy Kicking** for equipment required in this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

Refer to **Easy Kicking** instructions for setting up this activity and safety considerations.

Cut one foam pool noodle in half to make two bats. They are ideal for 'batting' practice because they are light in weight, and generally won't hurt if a child is accidentally struck during the activity. Give each child a bat. Play some lively music and let the children have fun striking over and over again. Do not let children wrap pantyhose or any other rope-like materials around their necks at any time. Use a piece of pool noodle to cover the legs of the pantyhose to prevent wrapping and tangling. Slit the length of the pool noodle along one side and slip it over the pantyhose legs.



Helping Children Learn to Strike

To help children grasp the concept of starting the swing with the bat behind them, use the cue "rest the bat on your shoulder before swinging." This is a concrete cue that helps children, who may not yet understand spatial relationship cues, know where to position the bat before swinging. Yet it also can develop bad habits in children who have already mastered the basics of striking. As soon as the children can understand, switch to the cue "hold the bat behind and above your shoulder."

Cues for Learning to Strike

Just Learning: "Look at the ball." "Keep the bat on your shoulder, then swing."

More Experienced: "Stand with your side to the target." "Step forward as you swing."

Easier: At first children are likely to hack or chop at the ball. Use hand-over-hand assistance to help the children learn a level swing. Older, school-aged children could help with this. With practice, and hand-over-hand assistance, children will learn to swing the bat level as they strike the ball.

Let children who have difficulty standing while striking, such as those who use wheelchairs, sit while striking. Lower tethered balls to their seated chest height.

Harder: Use less air in the balloons to make the striking target harder to hit.

Variety: Lower the height of the suspended balloons so they now rest on the floor. Ask the children to pretend that they are playing ice hockey or floor hockey or golf as they strike the balloons on the floor.

SWAT THE FLY



When you want preschoolers to run excitedly, try **Swat the Fly**. It takes just moments to learn the rules and boundaries. Then children charge around the play area, laughing and shouting, as they enjoy this activity! While some children drag 'flies,' made from plastic Frisbees and nylon cord, others chase them, trying to 'swat' the 'flies' with foam pool noodles.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Develop cardiovascular endurance • Practice striking



EQUIPMENT

- Foam pool noodles, cut in half to make two swatters
- Frisbees or vinyl plastic plates
- Nylon cord for pulling each Frisbee

Equipment Tip: Drill a hole through a Frisbee or plate rim. Insert a four foot length of cord, and knot it under the rim. Make two copies of the 'fly,' for each Frisbee. Tape the image of the fly to each side of the Frisbee with clear packaging tape.

NOTE:

- Have drinking water on hand and watch children closely during this activity, especially during hot and humid weather!

INSTRUCTIONS

Explain to the children that some of them will drag flies, while others chase the flies, trying to swat them with foam bats. Demonstrate dragging, swatting and moving safely within the playing area. Have all children move in the same direction to avoid collisions. Explain that children may change from dragging to swatting whenever they wish.

Give some children 'flies' to drag, and the rest foam pool noodle 'swatters,' then start the activity. If anyone objects to swatting flies, put pictures of drums on the disks instead, and have children chase the drums with their foam Pool Noodle drumsticks.

Easier: Help younger children with their movement and swatting if needed. Children who are slow runners are likely to chase flies that are dragged more slowly. Children who are fast runners are likely to chase the fast flies.

Children who use wheelchairs or mobile prone standers can swat the flies that others drag past them.

Variety: For an indoor variation, make 'flies' from balloons inside netting or pantyhose. Suspend the 'flies' from an overhead structure, leaving space for swatters to swing safely. All children become swatters to practice striking.



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